



Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

November 12, 2018

Rising Public Health Risks from Toxic Chemicals Examined at 2018 APHA Annual Meeting

Reporters interested in EPA, chemical policy, vulnerable populations, children's brain development, ADHD, asthma, pregnancy, flame retardants, and occupational health are encouraged to attend the following sessions:

4152.9 Promise and Perils of Using the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to Advance Health Equity, Tuesday, Nov. 13th, 10:30 AM – Noon

The 2016 Lautenberg Amendments to TSCA gave the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) new authorities to protect highly susceptible populations such as the developing fetus, children, and workers from dangerous chemicals that continue to be used despite significant evidence linking them to adverse health effects (e.g., asbestos, halogenated flame retardants, methylene chloride, phthalate plasticizers, toxic metals, per- and poly-fluorinated compounds). This panel will outline the new federal legal requirements, areas of litigation, how EPA's evaluations may be leaving people at risk; and recommended changes to improve public health and health equity.

Moderated by Patricia Koman, University of Michigan and former EPA scientist, panelists include:

- *Eve Gartner, J.D., senior attorney, Earthjustice, and part of the legal team that won the court order for EPA to update its lead dust hazard standard*
- *Veena Singla, Ph.D., Director of Policy and Science, University of California, San Francisco Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment, who testified on the science behind SF's recent ban on certain flame retardants*
- *Robert Harrison, M.D., senior attending physician, University of California San Francisco Medical School and director, UCSF Occupational Health Services, who helps track how farm workers are affected by pesticides*
- *Adam Finkel, Sc.D., Senior Fellow, Wharton Risk Management & Decision Processes Center, University of Pennsylvania, former Regional Administrator for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in Denver, and former Director of Health Standards Programs at OSHA headquarters*

4348.0 Exposure to Formaldehyde and Effect on Asthma Outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis, Tuesday, Nov. 13th, 3:40 – 4:00 PM

Despite decades of government evaluation of the relationship between asthma and formaldehyde - which is in most buildings and many furniture products - asthma was not included in EPA's economic analysis of the benefits of limiting formaldehyde. We conducted a systematic review of the scientific

evidence (published up to February 2018) to assess what difference it makes to exclude asthma from formaldehyde rulemaking. We found “sufficient” evidence that exposure to formaldehyde is associated with asthma diagnosis and symptoms in children and adults. Moreover, indoor exposure to formaldehyde was significantly associated with an 8% increased risk in asthma development in children per 10-fold increase in exposure. Our findings document that excluding asthma health risks from regulatory analysis underestimated the true health and economic benefits of regulation. More broadly, preventing relatively “low” risks brings “high” health benefits when exposures are ubiquitous.

- *Patrice Sutton, MPH, University of California, San Francisco*

5094.0 Project TENDR: How an alliance of scientists, health professionals, and advocates moves from consensus to collective action to protect public health from air pollutants and toxic chemicals putting brain development at risk, Wednesday, Nov. 14th, 10:30 – 10:42 AM

Project TENDR is working to move from scientific consensus on air pollution and toxic chemicals harmful to brain development, to action to reduce exposures, especially to pregnant women and children. This session will discuss policy recommendations and initiatives underway to target fossil-fuel related air pollution, lead, and classes of toxic chemicals (flame retardants, organophosphate pesticides, phthalates), and how APHA professionals can engage in this effort. While APHA endorsed the TENDR scientific consensus statement in November 2017, next steps are needed to reduce pollutants and chemicals that put children at increased risk of neurodevelopmental disorders, including intellectual deficits, ADHD, learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

- *Maureen Swanson, MPA, Learning Disabilities Association of America, Pittsburgh, PA*

5094.0 Flame Retardant Chemicals and Links to Chronic Disease: Emerging Threats and Policy Action, Wednesday, Nov. 14th, 10:54 – 11:06 AM

A prime example of chemicals increasing the risk of neurodevelopmental disorders in children, flame retardant chemicals have been used in every day products and building materials, including baby products and electronics, since the 1970s. Flame retardant chemicals are associated with loss of IQ in children, ADHD, fertility problems, and cancer. Traditional policy paradigms have failed to prevent harm; therefore to reduce harmful exposures, scientists, advocates and health professionals are advancing new policy approaches including disclosure/labeling of chemicals, flame retardant prohibitions, research for safer flame retardants, and market actions.

- *Veena Singla, Ph.D., Director of Science and Policy, University of California, San Francisco Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment*

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More information on these sessions: <https://prheucsf.blog/2018/11/06/prhe-at-apha-2018/>